

I found this information in the Health Letter published by Public Citizen's Health Research Group and thought it was worth sharing. It is titled "HGR's Quack-O-Meter": (as in "if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck.) Tips to Detect Fraud in the Marketing of Drugs and Devices.

"Consumers are bombarded with claims about new medications, diets and devices. These claims promise much, and there is no guarantee that they will deliver. In fact, there are usually indications that they will NOT deliver. In order to alert consumers to some of the tell-tale signs of questionable products, we have devised a quack-o-meter to assess these products.

A quack-o-meter reading showing any of the following promotional claims should be taken as a warning that the product is suspect and should be avoided. It claims to mitigate or cure a deadly or very serious disease.

The range of conditions it supposedly affects is wide and varied, encompassing different symptoms, degrees of severity, diseases and organ systems. The broader the spectrum, the more suspect the product.

The health benefits it claims to achieve are accompanied by other, nonmedical benefits, e.g., wrinkle reduction, memory enhancement, greater sexual potency. Claims are followed by exclamation points.

Results or improvements are promised within a short period of time (from "instantly" to "two weeks").
Ads feature scantily clad "satisfied customers".

The product is being plugged by a celebrity from the world of sports, TV or film. Easily-doctored "before" and "after" photographs accompany the text.

Testimonials are from a few users, with no evidence of effectiveness from reliable sources or randomized clinical trials.

. Some of the "results" can be easily attributed to a placebo effect, or to the fact that some conditions are self-limiting (meaning they will resolve on their own, such as a cold)."

I would add that one should seriously weigh the side effects, even though the chemical companies assure you they occur only RARELY and which are usually spoken so fast that your ears can't keep up, against any promised gain to determine what sacrifice you are willing to make for your health.

Make an informed decision. Don't volunteer to be a guinea pig.